

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 HA-05
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P R 301431Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7379
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 0354

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, SOPN, EAID, PLOS, HA, DR, CO
SUBJ: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BRUTUS

1. AT HIS REQUEST, I MET FRIDAY WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BRUTUS FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES IN HIS OFFICE. BRUTUS SAID HE WANTED TO OCCASIONALLY MEET WITH ME TO DISCUSS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND HAITI IN AN INFORMAL MANNER.

2. BRUTUS STRESSED HIS DESIRE THAT WE HAVE FRIENDLY, CORDIAL RELATIONS ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE STILL BELIEVES AMERICANS DO NOT UNDERSTAND HAITI AND ITS COMPLEXITIES. BRUTUS, AS IS HIS CUSTOM, PROCEEDED TO RECOUNT THE PECULIARITIES OF HAITIAN HISTORY AND CONCLUDED THAT GIVEN THEIR HISTORY THINGS MUST MOVE SLOWLY. HE SAID THAT IF THE GOH ATTEMPTED TO MOVE FASTER IN ITS LIBERALIZATION POLICY THINGS WOULD SOON GET OUT OF HAND. BRUTUS EXPRESSED HIS OPINION OF THE HAITIAN PRESS BY SAING THAT COMPLETE PRESS FREEDOM IN HAITI WAS IMPOSSIBLE. HE SAID THAT SOME JOURNALISTS WERE THEIR OWN WORST ENEMIES IN THAT THEY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RELAXED GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND GET THEMSELVES IN TROUBLE. HE SAID NO NEWSPAPER IN HAITI COULD SURVIVE WITHOUT SOME KIND OF OUTSIDE SUPPORT, EITHER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OR OTHER SOURCES. BRUTUS SAID NO ONE IN HAITI
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REALLY BUYS A PAPER, RATHER EVERYONE WILL BORROW SOMEONE ELSE'S COPY SO THAT CIRCULATION CAN NEVER BE ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT A REALLY INDEPENDENT PRESS.

3. I INDICATED TO BRUTUS THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT A TEAM FROM THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION MIGHT VISIT HAITI AND URGED THAT EVERY EFFORT BE MADE TO COOPERATE WITH THE

VISIT IF IT IS MADE. BRUTUS SAID HE SAW NO PROBLEM IN THIS AND THAT GOH WOULD NOT IMPOSE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON SUCH A VISIT.

4. I THEN ASKED BRUTUS IF GOH WAS GOING TO STICK TO ITS PROMISE TO INVITE THE OAS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. BRUTUS SAID THE COMMITMENT WAS MADE AND WILL DEFINITELY BE HONORED. HE DECLINED TO FIX A TIME, BUT SAID AMBASSADOR SOLOMON WAS BEING SENT INSTRUCTIONS TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUCH A VISIT.

5. WE THEN TURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AND I TOLD BRUTUS WE WERE CONSIDERING A NEW APPROACH TO OUR AID PROGRAMS. I SAID IT WOULD BE AN INCREASED PROGRAM, BUT WOULD IMPOSE TOUGH RESTRICTIONS AND FISCAL REQUIREMENTS. BRUTUS SAID HE WAS DELIGHTED TO KNOW OF A NEW AID INITIATIVE AND WOULD WELCOME TOUGH ECONOMIC CONTROLS. HE SAID, THAT OF COURSE, GOH WOULD NOT ACCEPT POLITICAL CONDITIONS AFFECTING THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. BRUTUS SAID HE HOPED WE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY TOUGH IN TWO REQUIREMENTS: FIRST, THE FIXING OF PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SECOND, IMPOSING TIGHT CONTROLS SO THAT THERE WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY NO CHANCE OF ANY "THIEVERY".

6. WE THEN DISCUSSED HAITI'S IMAGE, WHICH WE BOTH AGREED WAS QUITE BAD, TO SAY THE LEAST. BRUTUS SAID THAT HE HAD DELIBERATELY CHOSEN TO BE ON FOREIGN ASSIGNMENT DURING THE REIGN OF FRANCOIS DUVALIER AND THAT HE HAD BEEN FREQUENTLY EMBARRASSED OVER EVENTS IN HAITI. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE NEED TO

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IMPROVE HAITI'S IMAGE. I ASKED ABOUT THE CURRENT VISIT OF INFORMATION MINISTER GOUSSE TO THE U.S. AND BRUTUS SAID GOUSSE WAS THERE TO WORK ON IMPROVING HAITI'S IMAGE. HE SAID HAITI INTENDED TO HIRE A PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM. I STATED THAT OUR RELATIONS WITH GOUSSE HAD NOT BEEN SATISFACTORY AND THAT GOUSSE SEEMED TO AVOID CONTACT BOTH WITH OUR EMBASSY AND WITH U.S. JOURNALISTS. BRUTUS SAID GOUSSE WAS AN ODD PERSON WHO WAS NOT AS ACCESSIBLE AS HE SHOULD BE.

7. BRUTUS THEN MENTIONED THAT THE AGREEMENT WITH SANTO DOMINGO ON A DAM AND IRRIGATION PROJECT IN THE SOUTHEAST (PEDERNALES) WOULD SOON BE SIGNED. HE ALSO SAID AGREEMENT WITH COLOMBIA WAS NEAR ON SEA RIGHTS AND THAT A COLOMBIAN DELEGATION WOULD BE COMING TO HAITI TO CONCLUDE THE AGREEMENT.

8. WE PARTED WITH THE USUAL EXCHANGE OF COURTESIES AND AGREED TO MEET AGAIN SOON.

9. COMMENT: BRUTUS SEEMED ANXIOUS TO SMOOTH THINGS OVER FOLLOWING THE NEREE INCIDENT. HE, AS EXPECTED, PUSHED FOR UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENCE IN US-HAITIAN RELATIONS. HIS ESPOUSAL OF TIGHT CONTROLS ON AID FUNDS REFLECTS HIS PENCHANT

FOR PERSONAL HONESTY AND INTEGRITY. THINGS SEEM TO BE
SIMMERING DOWN AND BRUTUS MAY BE SIGNALING A RETURN TO THE
SLOW, DELIBERATE PACE TOWARD LIBERALIZATION.
JONES

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